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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PUNTLAND PRESIDENT BACKS AWAY FROM TFG -
PUNTLAND AGREEMENT

REF: NAIROBI 2344

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b,
d).

¶11. (C) Summary: Puntland President "Faroole", in a likely effort to undercut the TFG and deter his political rivals in Puntland, has backed away from a TFG - Puntland cooperation agreement (reftel) that he had signed with TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke in August. President "Faroole" appeared to attempt to use legitimate complaints about the TFG - Puntland agreement in order to leverage greater attention from the international community during his recent visit to Nairobi. "Faroole's" machinations, however, appeared to have cost him political capital in Puntland. Influential Puntland political figures and clan leaders, concerned that "Faroole" was acting against Puntland's interests, met in mid-November to discuss how to deal with the President. End summary.

Puntland President Rejects
Second Agreement with TFG

¶12. (C) Puntland President "Faroole," during a November 13 Nairobi meeting with TFG President Sharif, backed away from a TFG - Puntland cooperation agreement (reftel) that he had signed with TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke in August. The sticking point for "Faroole" seemed to be the TFG's refusal to allow his Puntland Administration to conclude international agreements. A provision that would have allowed Puntland to deal internationally had crept into the agreement that was to have been signed by "Faroole" and President Sharif, in spite of the reported work of a Puntland - TFG joint effort to harmonize the drafting. Deputy Prime Minister Sharif Hassan at the last moment reportedly warned President Sharif against signing. His efforts angered "Faroole," who left the Somalia Embassy with the intention to convene a press conference in order to air his problems with the TFG. Interventions by the EU, Italy, and the Somalia Unit, caused him to scrap the conference, although he did give interviews to a few Puntland-based media outlets.

¶13. (C) In a November 16 conversation with Somalia Unit, "Faroole" said he had sought in his November 13 meeting with President Sharif to win agreement for Puntland to broker international contracts without TFG input. "Faroole" admitted that he had not insisted on such a provision when negotiating the agreement with the TFG Prime Minister in August. "Faroole" told us that he only agreed to drop the issue in August because the agreement was brokered by TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke, with whom he has a good relationship and

a common clan lineage. "Faroole" said that he would not have signed the August agreement without the inclusion of Puntland's right to broker international contracts if President Sharif had been present. (Note: "Faroole" now appears to think that he is in a better position to re-negotiate the August TFG - Puntland agreement rather than to work to implement the points agreed. End note.)

"Faroole" Uses Nairobi
Visit in the Puntland
Media

¶4. (C) While in Nairobi, "Faroole" also used complaints about the TFG in order to leverage greater access to the international community and to fail to seriously engage on key issues. "Faroole" reiterated complaints he had made to the Ambassador (reftel) that key ministers within the TFG, to include Sharif Hassan, were seeking to undercut the TFG - Puntland agreement. "Faroole" told us that Hassan had acted as a spoiler in his meeting with President Sharif, and told us that he "would not work with Sharif Hassan." (Note: It may be true that some within the TFG are working to derail forward movement on de-centralization but, in this case, it appeared that Sharif Hassan was attempting to preserve the TFG's prerogative to manage international contacts for a federal Somalia state. End note.)

¶5. (C) During his time in Nairobi, "Faroole" showed little interest in discussing thorny political issues, although he highlighted them in order to secure meetings, and photo

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opportunities, with the international community. "Faroole" traveled with his son, the manager of the media outlet "Garowe online," who was quick to ensure press coverage in Puntland for "Faroole's" multiple meetings with the international community. (Note: Contacts tell us "Faroole" is considering appointing his son, responsible for an increasingly controlled Puntland media, to a key position within the Puntland government. End note.)

Behavior Sparks
Backlash in Puntland

¶6. (C) Our contacts tell us influential Puntland political figures and clan leaders, concerned that "Faroole" was acting against Puntland's interests, met in mid-November to discuss how to deal with the President. Clan elders and Puntland opinion makers are reportedly considering the possibility an interim government and/or a vote of no confidence in "Faroole" in the Puntland Parliament. (Note: It is unlikely that either alternative will be seriously explored but the fact that they are being discussed suggests growing unhappiness with "Faroole" in Puntland and a backlash against his most recent machinations here in Nairobi. End note.)

¶7. (C) In addition, our contacts tell us that the Hawiye/Abgal and Darod/Harti clans are attempting to reconcile President Sharif and President "Faroole". Multiple Puntland contacts tell us that they are unhappy with "Faroole's" actions and assure us that most Puntlanders think unity with south-central Somalia is essential.

¶8. (C) Comment: "Faroole" must be engaged in a way that does not embolden his secessionist tendencies or his ambitions to seek equal status with the TFG President. While it is important to assist Puntland more broadly, support to President "Faroole" must carefully be calibrated, in order to ensure that he does not use such support, be it technical or security, to enhance his stature. Supporting the TFG constitutional process, which is to be headquartered in Garowe, as called for in the TFG-Puntland agreement, is one way to encourage "Faroole" to see his future as tied to the TFG. We are making it clear to Puntland and to other Somali

contacts that the USG supports the TFG and that support for Puntland is part of that effort. We are encouraging colleagues in the international community here to do likewise.
RANNEBERGER